



CASTLEROCK VILLAGE PLAN 2023-2027

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Castlerock Village Plan 2023-2027

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Executive Summary

The Castlerock Village Plan outlined in this document will apply for the period 2023 until 2027. The plan was facilitated by Noelle Donnell of Hummingbird NI and was commissioned and financed by Castlerock Community Association (CCA). The Plan should belong to the whole community.

The Castlerock Community Association is a registered charity that operates for the benefit of the people living in and around Castlerock, delivering various activities and events through its management committee who are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

This new plan has been developed in a post-Covid environment where economic and social recovery are key. At the core of this plan are a series of objectives and actions designed to conserve and celebrate the village's built, natural and cultural heritage, safeguard its people and deliver a thriving economy.

The people of Castlerock are proud of its character: this is a community where residents and visitors create a unique and dynamic quality of life within a village setting on the Causeway Coast, that is attractive to many.

To ensure the most appropriate plan was developed for the village and community a planning process was agreed. This focused on a comprehensive consultation model that included:

- A public consultation event attended by 93 people
- A series of focus groups with the local business community, two community-based groups and residents
- A community audit resulting in 184 responses
- A series of interviews and
- Public sessions in the Castlerock Information Centre involving 28 local people presenting their ideas and priorities.

The location, context and history of Castlerock is outlined and the plan will be updated later in 2023 to include the 2021 Census data when available. The priority themes and actions have been developed within the broader policy context, most relevant to the geographic area, community and people. A brief overview of such initiatives has been included for reference. A SCOT (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats) analysis has been created to highlight the central points arising from the consultations. The process has also helped CCA form its vision for Castlerock and highlight the most relevant themes that have emerged since

the previous plan was created. The previous Castlerock Village Plan had three core themes whilst this plan has five:

- Transport and Infrastructure
- Planning and Housing
- Environment/Heritage
- Community Services and Facilities
- Village Life

To address issues raised under each of the themes, a targeted Action Plan has been developed. The Action Plan will inform how the organisation and village can move forward in the period 2023 until 2027. It highlights the need for further local auditing and research, and emphasises the importance of partnership working, a solid community development approach and continued collaborative support from within the local community, visitors, business and statutory agencies alike.

The Next Steps section of this document reiterates the importance of the people who live in and love Castlerock – those who know its character, history and dynamic to help make the plan reality. Finally, it is important to include the caveat that whilst CCA can be ambitious moving forward, it is also important to be realistic and recognise what is achievable within the context of a rural, voluntary community group with limited resources and time.

The previous Village Plan and Reviews can be viewed on the CCA website: www.castlerockni.co.uk.

Introduction and Background

The Village Plan presented in this document was commissioned and financed by the Castlerock Community Association (CCA). CCA works for the benefit of people living in and around Castlerock. The CCA is a registered charity that operates through a Management Committee elected at the annual general meeting. The Community Association works to sustain community life in the village and pursues a series of village development projects including managing a team of volunteers, running a Community and Visitor Information Centre in the heart of the village and a Polytunnel. The CCA also runs several social and activity events throughout the year and works with various stakeholders to implement the Village Plan.

The last Village Plan – approved and facilitated by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCGBC) in 2018 – provided a solid basis for enhancing the village including the refurbishment of the multiuse recreation grounds and improved street lighting and furniture. Since 2018, there have been many changes in Castlerock not least the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the composition of the community and the profile of visitors, as well as the health and welfare of residents. Considering these changes, and building on the success of the 2018-2022 plan, the CCA commissioned a new Village Plan for the next four years (2023-2027).

Figure 1 - A Snapshot of Castlerock



The overall goal of the Castlerock Village Plan 2023 – 2027 and its associated objectives and actions is to conserve and celebrate the village’s built, natural and cultural heritage, safeguard its people and deliver a thriving economy.

Castlerock is a village cherished by all who live, work and relax there and where its natural, built and cultural heritage are appreciated, celebrated and enhance the lives of residents and visitors. At the core of the Plan is Castlerock’s status as a village. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in their *Review of the Classification and Delineation of Settlements (2015) document* state that Castlerock is classified as a “BAND G Village” as its population is between 1000 and 2499. The next CCGBC Local Development Plan in 2030 will be a crucial process for maintaining Castlerock’s village status and ensuring that planning and development reflect local needs. The Village Plan presented here should provide strategic direction on how the CCA and wider community can input into consultations on the 2030 plan.

What became apparent in all the consultations was the connection of different categories of resident and visitors to Castlerock: whether as a holiday maker or a long-term resident, there was significant attachment and affection for the village. It has been crucial to this Plan therefore to ensure those things that make people love Castlerock can be protected, maintained and enhanced.

Over time CCA has consistently developed and delivered Village Plans, these have guided development and change for many years and highlight the importance of forward planning. Without this strategic focus CCA would not have been able to effect so much change across the village. It is important to be mindful of who is responsible for what – not everything can be the responsibility of CCA, with a range of statutory bodies and agencies also having a role to play. Whilst CCA has a strong strategic focus and is proficient in “why plan” there remains an important point to note: CCA should be ambitious moving forward, but it is also important to be realistic and recognise what is achievable for a rural, voluntary community group with limited resources and time.

The Process

This plan has been developed through a collaborate process. The process of developing the Plan took place between September 2022 and January 2023 and is summarised in figure 1 below.

Figure 2 – The Castlerock Community Planning Process



To ensure a comprehensive consultation process, the following series of activities was conducted:

- a public consultation event attended by 93 people
- focus groups held with the local business community, two local community-based groups and residents
- a community audit resulting in 184 responses
- a series of interviews with 12 stakeholders and
- public sessions in CCA base resulting in 28 local people presenting their ideas and priorities.

This Plan identifies actions that emerged across the consultation process as key priorities. Many of the priorities are beyond the scope of the Community Association to deliver, rather they have been identified as areas where the CCA and residents can facilitate, communicate and create networks and lobby relevant partners.

The Plan also outlines actions that the CCA can take the lead on - with support of residents and visitors, in particular in relation to information sharing and awareness raising.

Almost all the priority actions require resources – both financial and human - to implement. Given the scope of this Plan it should also be used to influence statutory agencies and other bodies when action is required and can be used as an evidence base when CCA wish to pursue funding or other support.

The Plan should act as the focal point for action moving forward, allowing for sustainable development that benefits residents, visitors, business and the community sector alike.

Castlerock - Location, Context and History

The village of Castlerock has developed as an attractive place to live and visit due to its situation on the world-famous Causeway Coast. It provides all the benefits of seaside living yet is removed somewhat from other attractions across the North Coast of Northern Ireland. The village is home to 1287 permanent residents according to the 2011 Census. However, there are two large caravan parks that accommodate 491 static caravans and 25 temporary caravans, used by seasonal visitors from Spring until Autumn. This results in a significant increase in the local population, bringing with it a variety of opportunities and challenges. Castlerock is five miles west of Coleraine and is just off the main A2 connecting Limavady to Coleraine. The village retains a rail link on the Derry/Londonderry to Belfast line and lies along Cycle Route 93, part of the Sustrans Network. The character and growth of the village has seen some changes over the years. Most recently, and with the Covid 19 pandemic, the village experienced an increase in day visitors and tourism as well as an expansion of second homes, air B&B properties and rising house prices.

The village lies within the Binevenagh Area of Natural Outstanding Beauty (ANOB) and has a significant tourist function. It is home to two caravan parks, a championship golf course and a blue flag beach. Castlerock is positioned close to several National Trust properties which are set along popular walking routes, the village has seen several environmental improvement schemes, including the regeneration of the Promenade area with improved seating, footpaths and boardwalks. Ongoing collaboration with Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership (BCCLP) is also hoped to deliver environmental enhancements to the village during 2023 and beyond. Additionally, Castlerock has been selected by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society to participate in their Hands on Heritage project which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Figure 3 - Map of Castlerock and surrounding area



Due to its location, there has been increased interest in the area following the Covid-19 pandemic, with a growing number of second homes and anecdotal evidence that local people are facing issues around affordability and accessibility of property when it comes on the market.

In terms of local infrastructure and facilities, the village is home to the Peter Thompson Hall, which is the base for the vibrant Scout group, a popular older people’s group, local bowls, the community playgroup and community events. The Multiuse Games Area (MUGA) was upgraded during the previous VillagePlan, while the green space and play area are popular and well-used by local families and visitors. Both these facilities are owned and operated by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Castlerock’s annual walking festival, Walkfest, has grown over the years but has seen increased interest since Covid-19. The festival is delivered on a voluntary basis and sees visitors coming from the area from across the island of Ireland and beyond.

Several local artisan businesses and essential services have developed in recent years, these add to local sustainability and have broadened the range of services and facilities available whilst also adding to the character of the village.

In terms of its history, the name Castlerock derives from a black basalt outcrop close to the shore, the area around here has been inhabited for around 9000 years. Up until the advent of the railway, Castlerock was really a small collection of houses close to the shore. In 1853 the railway line opened between Londonderry and Coleraine, which led to the growth of Castlerock as it developed as a seaside resort, partly due to a scheme which offered free first-

class rail travel to anyone who would build a villa here¹. The period since has seen the village grow and expand where today it is a growing and developing community where visitors and residents add to the flavour and character of the area.

In terms of giving some flavour and context to the Castlerock community, the most up to date statistics for the wider council area show there is a higher percentage of over 40s living locally compared to Northern Ireland as a whole. The estimated population of Causeway Coast and Glens Local Government District (LGD) at 30 June 2018 was 144 246, of which 71 497 (49.6%) were male and 72 749 (50.4%) were female.

Figure 4 – Population estimates per broad age band, 2018

	CCGBC	CCGBC%	Northern Ireland
Total Population (2018)	144 246		1 881 641
Children (0-15yrs) %	28 372	19.67%	20.91%
Young Working Age (16-39 yrs) %	41 909	29.05%	30.80%
Older Working Age (40-64 yrs) %	47863	33.18%	31.91%
Older (65+ yrs) %	26 102	18.10%	16.38%

Castlerock – a socio-economic analysis:

The most recent census figures for Castlerock are from 2021 but at the time of writing this report had not yet been released. The 2011 figures have been included but when the new statistics are available this section will be updated with the new figures. The 2017 Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM) for Castlerock Super Output Area are also included.

- The resident population of Castlerock recorded at the 2011 census was 1256 people (1550 in 2017 NIMDM)
- The population decreased by 2.9% between the 2001 and 2011 census

¹ <https://www.causewaycoastalroute.com/castlerock>

- 17.99% (2011) of the resident population are under 16 years of age in comparison to the NI average of 20.8%
- 22.93% (2011) of the resident population are over 65 years of age in comparison to the NI average of 16%
- 16.48% of the usual resident population belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion with 77.79% (2011) belong to or were brought up in the Protestant and other Christian community background
- The percentage of people across Castlerock with low or no qualifications was 32.14% in 2011 (41.1% in 2017 NIMDM) with the NI average quoted as 23.65%
- 59.56% (2011) of adults between 16-74 years of age are economically active, which is lower than the NI average of 66.22%
- 20.54% (2011) of the population have a limiting long-term illness, health problems or disability
- Castlerock is one of the least deprived areas in NI, with an MDM score of 373 (2017 NIMDM)
- Under the Access to Services domain (2017 NIMDM) Castlerock ranks at 177 out of 890 Super Output Areas.

Current Policy Context - The Bigger Picture

The priority actions and themes in the 2023 Castlerock Village Plan have been developed within the broader policy context of the CCGBC Local Development Plan (LDP) 2030 and other strategic documents. The wider policy context provides important opportunities to align the actions of the new Village Plan with council and other priorities. The policy context is also subject to the underlying political situation in Northern Ireland and any tensions arising thereof, including slow pace of change, protracted decision making and as of early 2023 – the lack of a functioning executive.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 Preferred Options Paper (POP)

“A vibrant and innovative economy, sustainably delivering health and well-being and high quality built and natural environments, for all citizens and visitors to the Borough.” The Plan outlines the Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Local Development Plan. It identifies what the Council considers to be the main strategic land use planning issues affecting the Borough as outlined below.

- Spatial Considerations and Options

- Social Considerations and Options
- Economy Considerations and Options
- Environment Considerations and Options
- Infrastructure considerations and Options

CCGBC Corporate Strategy 2021-2025

The corporate strategy is the Council’s commitment to the Borough, providing a focus and direction given the challenges that exist now and in the future. The strategy ensures there is a shared and agreed direction in achieving the overarching vision for the area. The vision is stated as maximising “the benefits of our unique location and landscape by providing accessible, efficient and sustainable services fulfilling local and visitor expectations.”

The corporate strategy links to and works alongside the Community Plan and the Local Development Plan and identifies five strategic priorities including,

- Cohesive Leadership
- Local economy
- Improvement and Innovation
- Healthy and engaged communities
- Climate change and the environment

A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan is a strategic framework document setting out the future aspirations for the people who live, work and visit the Causeway Coast and Glens area. The purpose of the community planning process has been identified as developing “a long-term vision and plan for the Causeway Coast and Glens area and all its citizens”. The plan aims to “integrate wide ranging streams of public life...achieved through meaningful partnership and collaborative working with the community being at the heart.”

A review of the Community Plan took place during 2022 which led to a revised Community Planning Strategic Partnership. This new model ensures participation from the 10 elected members, Community Plan Delivery Plan Action Leads, 13 statutory partners and the Community Engagement Platform Co-Chairs

The Community Plan aims to address three strategic population outcomes

- A Healthy Safe Community
- A Sustainable Accessible Environment
- A Thriving Economy

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Community Development Strategy 2020 – 2023

This strategy identifies three key outcomes following a local engagement process including,

- Our communities will be skilled and confident
- Our communities will be connected
- Our communities will be fair and inclusive

A series of indicators and an action plan have been developed to ensure these are met.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Causeway Coast & Glens Housing Investment Plan 2019-2023

The NIHE vision is stated as “everyone is able to live in an affordable and decent home, appropriate to their need, in a safe and attractive place.”

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Second Homes Paper October 2022

In January 2023 the Planning Department within CCGBC released a paper on the subject of second home ownership across the borough. The report links to the cohesive leadership theme within the Corporate Plan and explores options for dealing with the issues of second homes and short-term holiday lets and provides a comparison with other jurisdictions on tackling this issue. It provides recommendations on the way forward to assist in addressing this issue through changes in planning regulation and legislation. The paper states that the potential percentage of second homes in Castlerock is estimated at between 13% and 21%.² Evidence from consultations for this plan suggest that the figure could be significantly higher. Robust, independent data on second homes would provide important information for inputting into the 2030 Local Development Plan and achieving the objectives in this Plan, particularly regarding the social and economic sustainability of the village.

Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) – Rural Policy Framework

This policy framework has five thematic pillars:

- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Sustainable Tourism
- Health and Wellbeing
- Employment
- Connectivity

The department delivers the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Inclusion Programme (TRIPSI) and will be seeking additional funding through PEACE PLUS and other opportunities.

DAERA are aiming to develop a rural advisory group in Spring 2023 to work in partnership across government and key rural stakeholders, providing oversight and holding government

² CCGBC Local Development Plan (POP) refers to a figure for second home ownership of 30% (taken from the Second Homes on the North Coast, February 2003, DoE)

departments to account. This could be another group where the CCA could participate to build networks and seek opportunities for support and funding.

Progress from the 2018-2022 Village Plan

The previous Plan identified three key themes and associated actions:

- Culture and Heritage
- Environment and Infrastructure and
- Community Services and Development

During the delivery period from 2018 until 2022, the Community Association and partners have focused on the actions identified in the plan to meet local need. An action plan review was conducted in February 2022 and is still available on CCA's website <https://castlerockni.co.uk/village-plan/>.

Some of the actions identified remain relevant and are highlighted later in this plan. There are several issues that have been present in previous plans and continue to be voiced as important through the consultation delivered as part of this planning process.

What people said - Findings from the consultation process

A comprehensive consultation model was delivered in the Autumn of 2022. In terms of public engagement this included:

- A public Café Culture style event, attended by 93 people. The Café Culture style was adopted to enable people to reflect on life in Castlerock whilst also providing an opportunity for people to make suggestions for change and improvement. This model means that a wide range of quality information is generated in a structured and interesting environment
- A series of drop-in sessions at the community hub, attended by 28 people. This model ensured people could make suggestions and discuss issues on a confidential manner
- The local community audit, with responses received from 184 people. This includes residents and visitors. The audit gave an opportunity for people to inform the community association on how they viewed and used the village alongside priorities for action.
- A series of one-to-one interviews with local people, that focused on village life, the work of CCA, gaps that existed, strengths, challenges and priorities moving forward
- Four focus group sessions with the local business community, local community groups and residents.

Through the consultation process, a SCOT analysis (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats) has been completed. This analysis shown overleaf summarises the key points that emerged during the consultation.

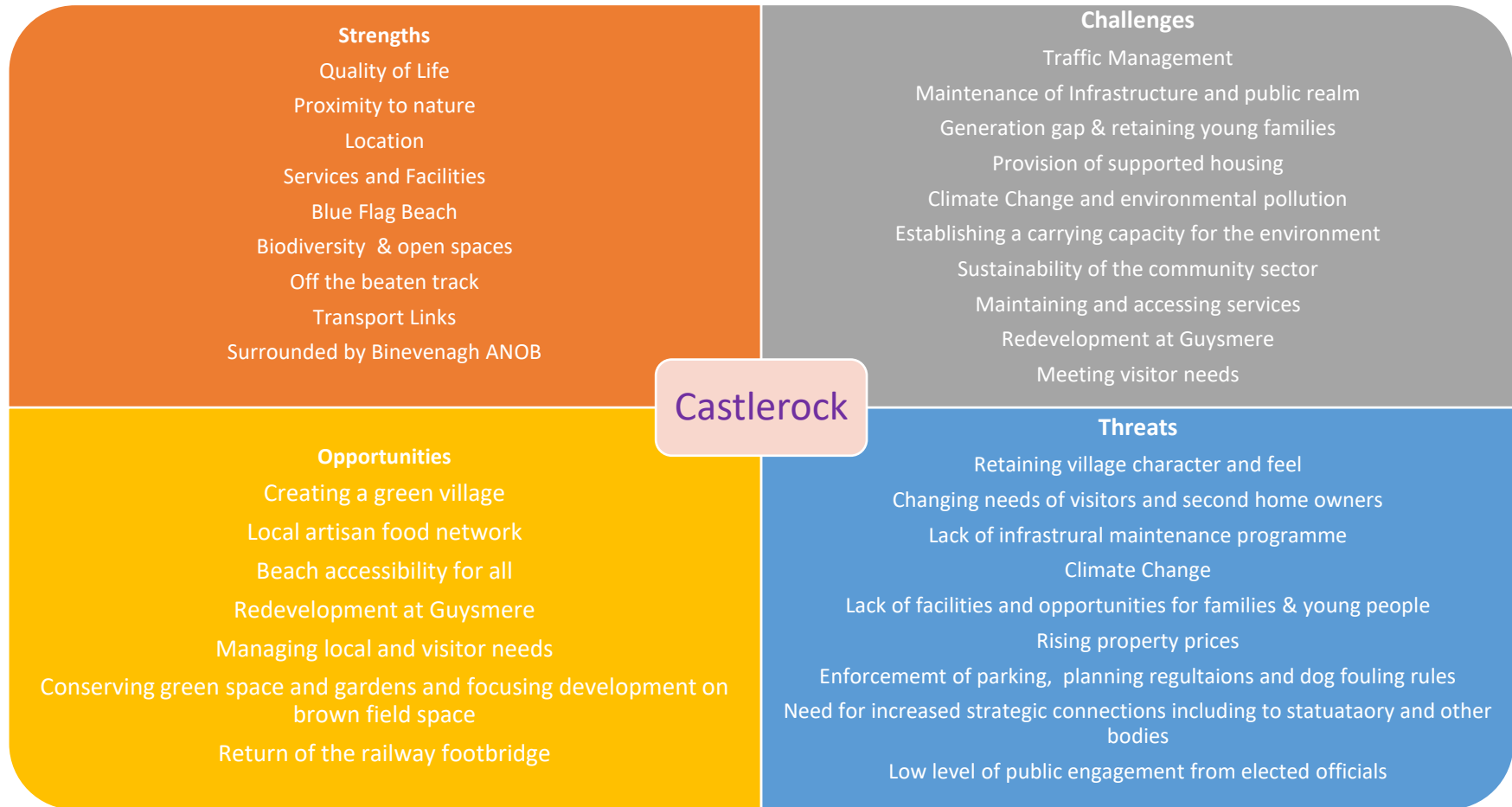


Figure 1 - SCOT analysis - Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats



The main benefit of this SCOT analysis is that it helps frame the emergent themes and the vision for Castlerock. Some themes are similar to those highlighted in previous plans while others are completely new - the previous plan focused on three themes; this has now been expanded to five themes.

It is important to be realistic around what can be achieved, CCA is reliant upon voluntary effort, it has a limited sphere of influence and limited resources. It will not be possible for CCA to achieve everything that was raised as an issue. Moving forward CCA must maintain a focus on what is achievable - both directly and with statutory agencies other organisations - and what will result in the biggest benefit for the village and its people. The thematic approach should act as a guide to the main priorities whilst also aligning with the Vision for Castlerock moving forward.

Vision for Castlerock

This vision has been framed by the consultation process and through the creative thinking of the community association.

To create a sustainable, inclusive and welcoming village environment which uses our physical assets, heritage and culture to benefit residents and visitors alike.

Theme 1 – Transport and Infrastructure

Issues around transport and traffic management in the village are an increasing cause for concern, this includes issues around signage, access around the village - particularly the beach, lack of enforcement of parking restrictions and traffic flow during busy periods. There is also concern about protecting children crossing the busy A2 outside of Hezlett Primary School. Since February 2023 there has been no funding for a crossing attendant and in the absence of any pedestrian crossings, children at the school are at significant risk. Separately, there is also interest in the establishment of public electric vehicle charging points in the village since there are currently none.

Opportunities exist in terms of maximising usage of the railway network with interest in the provision of a secure bicycle parking shelter at the station, left luggage cages and general improvements to the station area. Looking forward, there could be opportunities to significantly reduce traffic during the holiday period through dedicated car free days, with community bikes/transport allowing visitors to come to the village without cars. The historic railway foot bridge remains an issue of concern

to many in the village. As of 2023 the Community Association and others have worked with the Council – who own the bridge - to have improvement works completed and the bridge returned to its original site. Monitoring how this work will progress is going to be a key priority.

Theme 2 – Planning and Housing

There are concerns around how future development will meet the needs of residents, second homeowners and visitors. There have been examples of planning breaches and retrospective planning which has impacted the character of the village - the loss of several key sites and facilities in the village causes concern – with a perceived shift away from housing to an apartment led residential pattern which brings with it changes in how the village functions and exists. There is a perception that developers design and promote apartments to the second home/holiday market over providing houses for the existing population.

The CCGBC second homes report issued in early 2023 provides some detail on how local planning needs can be addressed to ensure the village status and character is retained. Further local research is required to establish how long-term sustainability is impacted by second home ownership and how these issues can address the needs of all stakeholders. There remains concern around the availability and affordability of homes for local families as well as sheltered housing for those wishing to downsize and stay in the local area.

The proposed development at Guysmere is also a priority for people. In general, there is support for redevelopment that includes the local community and offers some innovation in terms of usage, in particular with respect to “fold” type accommodation. At all stages (both survey and consultations), the importance of the Guysmere site and the potential positive and negative impact of its redevelopment were raised. Whilst the wider community is aware of the governance and ownership of Guysmere, there remains a desire to highlight some of their concerns and interests: the community has consistently advised through the consultation process that there are opportunities for sheltered housing, direct beach access, local inclusion activities and events, with potential for economic regeneration activities such as a prestige hotel, restaurant or spa on the site which could be explored further.

Theme 3 – Environment/Heritage

During the consultation process, the preservation and conservation of the natural environment in Castlerock was highlighted as one of the most important issues. There is an appetite for the development of a strategy for preserving and protecting the beach that takes into account climate change, sustainable development and the

conservation and preservation of local biodiversity. Equally there is demand for the beach to be more accessible – preserving the blue flag status whilst also enabling improved access for those with different abilities and needs – maintaining dune boardwalks, installation of an adult changing facility, beach shower and beach access for wheelchair users. There have been a range of views on the issue of vehicular beach access, with limited car parking in the village it is important that any vehicular access to the beach is conducted in a manner that does not negatively impact biodiversity and a trade-off between possible beach access and overcrowding in summer.

There has been a demand for improvements and enhancements to be made to the public areas in the village. Moving forward a priority for the CCA – in partnership with other relevant organisations - should be conducting a local audit of facilities and services – including play provision, parking, and green spaces in the village. It is also clear from the consultation that there are enforcement issues around dog-fouling and dog control zones. Maintenance and servicing of waste bins and recycling points are also considered important, especially at busy times as these can often reflect badly on the appearance of the village.

The physical built heritage and cultural associations were highlighted as important to stakeholders. Large villas, gardens, terraces and social and cultural associations contribute to the landscape character and ambiance. Recent developments have resulted in the loss of key buildings and links with past activity. Actions highlighted will raise awareness of and contribute to preserving built heritage, celebrating culture whilst delivering a unique all-year-round vibrant and economically thriving village. The CCA manage the Village Beautiful project each summer and acknowledge the invaluable support of the CCGBC and Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Theme 4 – Community services and facilities

The consultation has afforded an opportunity for residents, visitors and second homeowners to explore and identify a series of important community-based priorities. There is widespread support for the work conducted by CCA with encouragement to deliver more activities and events and to share information about current and future policies that impact on the village. The role of the CCA in lobbying is important, which often continues in a quiet and invisible manner. There is support for greater partnership approaches across the village, including with the business community, community-based organisations and Guysmere Trust amongst others.

The delivery of a local infrastructure programme is seen as important – ensuring facilities and services meet the needs of all users. The delivery of a more detailed infrastructural audit will help identify further actions. The role of CCA in developing and delivering local activity programmes and events is seen as important and valuable. There is scope for developing new programmes – such as youth activities and/or young families support, whilst also consolidating progress on the use of CCA premises as a community hub, working with other partners in the village (Scouts, Wednesday Club etc) and beyond to build success -including engaging with statutory agencies to ensure interventions meet local need.

Theme 5 – Village Life

The character and nature of Castlerock continue to be important to those who engaged in the consultation. Ensuring visitor and local resident needs are met in a sympathetic manner is paramount. Visitors bring a valued contribution to the vibrancy and sustainability of local business and community life. However, it is also important that the needs of permanent residents are also met – particularly for the sustainability of essential services, businesses and facilities. The consultation process highlighted that there are implications for the village around second home ownership including the increasing trend for homes to be converted into air B&B properties. The impact of second and holiday homes require further exploration in a specific piece of research to establish challenges and opportunities offered, as well as exploring how other locations have addressed these.

These five themes run through and cut across the action plan that follows. This plan is focused on three interlinked goals and should form the basis of the Village Plan. The priorities are based on the findings from consultations outlined above.

Almost all the actions outlined will rely on working with partners, be they statutory bodies, local council or academic institutions. They also require not only funding, but human resources – time and commitment of agencies such as the Causeway Rural Urban Network (CRUN), the Northern Ireland Health Alliance as well as the CCA and Castlerock residents and visitors.

Action Plan

As outlined, the Action Plan relies on a wide range of cross-sectoral partnerships and local engagement. Some of the goals are long term, complex and require national government actions. Others are more immediate. However, even in the case of longer-term goals, there are things that can be done – organizing, lobbying, monitoring, and communicating. Caution is also required as change doesn't happen overnight.

HOW CHANGE CAN HAPPEN

Example 1: The Railway Bridge

Return of the historic railway bridge to Castlerock station was one of the key priorities arising from the consultations. Repair and maintenance of the bridge comes with significant costs and already lobbying by the CCA and others has resulted in the council determining that the bridge can be saved. The railway bridge has regrettably become a symbol of Council neglect in the eyes of some residents.

The actions of the community to achieve this priority include monitoring council decision making, lobbying elected representatives following up with Translink raising awareness through Facebook social media etc. If it were determined that the cost of repairing maintaining the bridge was too much for the Council and Translink other forms of fundraising would need to be considered given it is of such a high priority.

Example 2 Guysmere site redevelopment

The Guysmere site is of huge significance to Castlerock residents and visitors given its history and strategic location within the village. Current residents as well as previous visitors to the facility have an interest in the site, and in particular ensuring that the beach area surrounding is accessible to all and that the site is being attractively maintained. There is also concern that any development and new activities are inclusive and welcoming to the whole community.

While the site is owned and managed by the Guysmere Trust on behalf of the Presbyterian Church who are fundraising for their own vision for use of the site, it is important that the community views and perspective are communicated to the trust given the potential of this site both negatively and positively impact on the future vibrancy of the village.

The five strategic themes that emerged from the consultations are cross-cutting and interlinked therefore, the Plan that follows distills these themes into three goals each with short, medium and long term actions that should act as a guide for Castlerock Community Association in the period from 2023-2027. Maintaining Castlerock’s status as a village within the current settlement development boundary and adjoining ANOB, in the run up to the 2030 Local Development Plan underpins many of the goals.

The plan identifies actions, who is responsible, possible sources of funding and support, as well as how they fit into wider policy initiatives and goals. The plan should be a live document, updated and amended as specific goals are achieved or when new goals become apparent.

Village Plan: Action Plan 2023-2027

GOAL ONE: Enhance Castlerock’s built environment and infrastructure					
Objective	Responsibility	Community Actions	Possible sources of funding	Timeline	Link with wider policy
Reinstall and maintain the historic railway bridge	Translink, CCGBC	CCA to lobby CCGBC and to monitor progress	CCGBC/Translink	2023	Department of Communities Historic Buildings Council
Upgrade the playpark	CCGBC	CCA commission play audit with relevant partner	Mae Murray Foundation Peace Plus	2024	CCGBC Corporate Strategy 2021-2025
Ensure secure storage at the station - Bike shelter - Left luggage lockers	Translink	CCA to liaise with Translink	Translink CCGBC	2024	CCGBC Corporate Strategy 2021-2025
Improved traffic management - One way system on Main Street and Promenade - Review and upgrade signage highlighting alternative parking.	DfI Roads Service	CCA Traffic audit over July/August demonstrating the problems CCA outreach with community to lobby DfI	DfI Roads service	2023 summer	CCGBC Corporate Strategy 2021-2025 A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030

- Enforcement of parking regulations	PSNI				
Ensure safe road crossing by Hezlett Primary school - Maintain and extend 20mph light limit until 4pm - Zebra crossings by the school	DfI Roads Service	CCA work with Hezlett school to ensure 20mph signs outside School Lobby for funding/ reinstatement of crossing attendant	DfI Education Authority	2023	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Public electric charging points in the village	CCGBC	CCA to lobby council for installation	DfI Roads service Private foundation	2023	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Enforcement of planning regulations	CCGBC	CCA produce information sheet to raise awareness of current limits and regulations e.g. sharing local plan map link on CCA website	NL Community fund	Ongoing	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Preserve historic buildings and social history of village and its people	CCGBC Planning Committee	Raise awareness of Castlerock history Audit at risk buildings Work with QUB Built Environment Department Monitor planning applications Walking tours Talks programme	Hands on Heritage National Lottery Heritage fund Partnership with Ulster and Queens University	Ongoing	Department of Communities Historic Buildings Council NIHE Causeway Coast & Glens Housing Investment Plan 2019-2023
Improve facilities in the village - Promenade wall	CCGBC	CCA commission audit of facilities Liaise with Council	Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership	Audit second half of 2023	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult changing facilities - Outdoor furniture - Showers 					<p>Development Strategy 2020 – 2023</p> <p>DAERA – Rural Policy Framework</p>
Maintain balance between second homes and permanent residents to ensure economic and social sustainability of the village	CCGBC 2030 Local Development Plan	Input into development of next CCGBC Local Development Plan Commission research study Explore opportunities for sheltered housing/fold	Universities CCGBC planning committee	Ongoing	<p>NIHE Causeway Coast & Glens Housing Investment Plan 2019-2023</p> <p>CCGBC Second Homes Paper October 2022</p>
Deliver a series of walks and talks showcasing the built and cultural heritage of the village	CCA	CCA	Coleraine Historical Society National Lottery Heritage Fund Peace Plus	Ongoing	

GOAL TWO : Enhance and protect Castlerock's natural environment					
Objective	Responsibility	Community Actions	Sources of funding	Timeline	Link with wider policy
Village Beautiful	CCA	Coordinate project	CCGBC and NI Housing Executive	Ongoing	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Enforcement of regulations on littering and dog fouling	PSNI CCGBC CCA	Promote use of Reportable App Co-ordinate litter picks around the village and access roads		Ongoing	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Raise awareness of the uniqueness of the area through a series of talks focusing on landscape and biodiversity.	CCA	CCA partnering with National Trust, Costal Partnership Engage in the National Trust study of climate change and coastal resilience. Deliver a bioblitz along with the Hezlett school and other youth groups e.g. scouts	Live here love here Hezlett School Scouts	2023	DAERA – Rural Policy Framework
Co-ordinate a series of beach clean ups	CCGBC	CCA Scouts	CCGBC Keep NI Beautiful	Ongoing	
Delivery of annual Walkfest	Walkfest	Walkfest Team – supported by CCA	CCGBC Translink Supporters	Ongoing	
Research potential for a green flag award for Castlerock	CCA	CCA sub-committee		2024	DAERA – Rural Policy Framework

GOAL THREE: Support people and the wider community					
Objective	Responsibility	Community Actions	Sources of funding	Timeline	Link with wider policy
Deliver inclusive programme of events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extension of Winter Warmer - Talks - Seasonal and celebratory experiences (e.g. Easter Egg Hung) 	CCA Castlerock Entertainment Committee	Recruit volunteers Monitor funding opportunities Reporting on grants	CRUN NI Health Alliance National Lottery CCGBC community funds	Ongoing	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Communicating and information sharing	CCA	Regular Facebook round up of what's going on in the area Posters in the Visitor and Information Centre		Ongoing	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Facilitating networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business - Community groups 	CCA	Inviting groups to address CCA Hosting regular round tables		Ongoing	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Enhance use of the Visitor and Information Centre to create a community hub	CCA	Booking process and form Outreach to other community groups	Village Draw CCGBC National Lottery	Ongoing	A Better Future Together - A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-2030
Explore options for engaging all sections of the Castlerock community	CCA	Research need. Explore what works elsewhere	National Lottery Peace Plus	Ongoing	

Strengthening CCA volunteering and engagement	CCA	Review sub-committee structure Year round outreach Recruitment through events Ensure CCA is inclusive and welcoming to all members of the community		Second half of 2023	
Legacy plan for CCA Management Committee	CCA	Invite other groups to participate e.g. a youth representative through the scouts Succession plan to enhance capacity of CCA		2024 Ongoing	
Enhance political engagement	CCA	Encourage local residents to stand for public office Offer CCA facilities for local village surgeries (councilors, MLAs, MP) Monitor CCGBC minutes		Following election cycles e.g council elections and ongoing	

Next Steps

The Action Plan should pave the way for future development for CCA. The Community Association already operates in a strategic fashion through a sub-committee structure. The delivery of action points should be the responsibility of the relevant sub-committee with the main management committee providing oversight. In addition, efforts should be made to involve more people with a range of skills in the work of the Committee.

The Action Plan could be updated annually with the CCA reporting on progress against the priorities.

There is an opportunity through this plan to engage with new partners across the community, inviting new members on to the committee to ensure all voices are heard (youth in particular - through the local scouts for example). There is also a need to engage with statutory agencies and bodies with a remit for the local area – ensuring maintenance, upkeep and enforcement is completed. The delivery model for CCGBC 's Community Plan has been revised in late 2022 to enable local representation, this offers further opportunity for Castlerock to engage strategically and explore development opportunities that could benefit the area. Equally there may be continued opportunity through the Binevenagh & Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership for further strategic development of the village and wider area.

Additionally, it is important moving forward that the community, village and CCA are connected politically – be that through the local council. at Assembly level or with the local MP, this will assist in the appropriate supports and services being allocated to the village and the wider community.

However, it is important that the people who live in and love Castlerock, who know its character, history and dynamic make the plan a reality. This plan is a starting point, and outlines that more local research and auditing is required - once this is complete CCA will be able to move forward with priorities for action.

There will be funding implications associated with actions - these will shape what can or cannot be completed, but it will be important to retain a focus on what is achievable by a voluntary group like CCA.

Glossary

CCA	Castlerock Community Association
CCGBC	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
BCLLP	Binevenagh Coastal & Lowland Partnership
LGD	Local Government District
NIMDM	Northern Ireland Measures of Multiple Deprivation
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
DAERA	Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
TRIPSI	Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Inclusion
RHA	Rural Housing Association
Dfi	Department for Infrastructure
CCGHT	Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
PHA	Public Health Agency
PCSP	Police and Community Safety Partnership



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